Thinking the Global with Literature

Yeung, Heather

Published in:
New Global Studies

DOI:
10.1515/ngs-2019-0009

Publication date:
2019

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Heather H. Yeung*

Thinking the Global With Literature: Introduction

https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2019-0009

The provocation to 'think the global with literature' is one which demands that a reader/thinker adjust the framework from one which is predicated on a working definition of globalization (whether this definition is one wherein 'globalization' is conceived as a solely late twentieth century economic-political phenomenon, or one which stretches as far back as what a Western literary critic may call the start of the Modern era proper – the early sixteenth century), to one whose mode of speculative reason – the idea of a globe both with and without the conceptual reality of globalization – was at once prior to this and also remains prevalent today. It is a provocation that, rather than asking for an astringent set of comparative terms and reductions, asks that its exposures and articulations are open, mobile, and, even as they are grounded in evidentiary supposition, are productively speculative. The adjustment from thinking 'globalization' to thinking the global is one which carries over the variety of meanings, and as various disagreements, that Dan Rebellato sees as the contested hallmarks of the 'globalization' trend, jostling difficulties of 'consciousness, conflict, politics, and money' (Rebellato 2009, 4). Yet, in carrying these things over – implicated in but distinct from an idea of 'thinking the global' – thought is also freed up from the need to pin down a discrete structure to globalization; freed up to allow for the literary to facilitate experimentation in the possibilities of global thought. The global, after all, is a question of scale and of possibility; of evidence and of speculation; of maintenance and of disruption all predicated on the formal, geometrical, material reality of this planet. To think the global is to look not only at the interiorized Anthropocene perspective, which 'we can only think from the inside out' (Taylor 2017, 31), but also to allow for the radically exteriorized perspective on (and of) the earth as globe. There is a real and speculative scale at play here – from the phonemic through to a syntactic level, to the layerings and effects of plot, character, speech and form upon its readers – since literature admits both the coexistence and calling into question of different scales, modes, and possibilities of thought, then its speculative, disruptive, position in relation to other modes of articulating the global, and its, at times too easy, enactment of scalar thought,

***Corresponding author: Heather H. Yeung,** University of Dundee, Dundee, UK,
E-mail: h.yeung@dundee.ac.uk

means that literature provides us with a privileged perspective through which to view the possibilities of a, or many modes of, the global.

The primary aspect of method and composition that distinguishes literary from other modes of articulation is that it allows for, thrives on, and even derives its poetic and personal force from, an aesthetic whose hallmark is one that admits ambiguity, and eschews, through the operations of language and form, any simplicity of fact-based statement or linear narrative. Does this mean that the literary is a mode which is looked at by those from the interior of other disciplines with suspicion? Yes, it does; and not solely as a haunting Platonic distrust. And yet the earliest acts of literary exegesis are bound up in the imaginative critical thought (philosophical, astrological, and historical) that is only possible under the auspices of a global imaginary; the disentanglement of the literary and the global is one of a skewed sort of *a posteriori* disciplinary force rather than of current critical habit. To see the earliest recorded instance of this productive entanglement at work is to look back not only to an early act of literary criticism, but also to look back to the first recorded instance of the realization of a model of the terrestrial globe; and here we see the act of globalizing is implicated in those 'models that depict, represent, or simulate the planet as a whole' – 'a constitutive element of [...] expansion on a planetary scale' (Taylor 2017, 34), but *without* an overtly imperial strategy behind it. Although the oldest surviving terrestrial globe – the Behaim Globe or *Erdapfel*, on whose map the Americas had not yet been included – dates back to the pre-Columbian era of geometry, discovery, colonial expansion, and mapping (1490–2), traces of realized terrestrial globes are to be found as far back as the 150s BCE. The 'history of globes', we can observe, has not always been one which 'entwines scientific exploration and imperial power' (Taylor 2017, 36). Look far enough and we discover, via the descriptions of Strabo, tales of how the Pergamene philological scholar Crates of Mallus 'traced on a spherical surface the area in which we say the inhabited world is situated' (Strabo, *Geography* 2.5.10 [Loeb 449]); 'the first evidence of such a device, and of any attempt to represent visually the entire earth' (Roller 2015, n.p.). What evidence remains of Crates' exegeses of the Homeric corpus demonstrates the extent to which they were in essence multidisciplinary and untouched in the main by any economic or political rhetoric – expressing not only a fine attention to grammatical effect, but also predicated on the belief that it was through the medium of poetry that Homer expressed not only literary but also philosophical and scientific truth. Thus, although attuned to the geometric and topographical advances of his day, Crates' globe was a tool built from literary, rather than scientific, observation and analysis, its construction stemming from an interaction with a literary text, and remains evidence of how the literary can help us think the possibilities of the global, even in an era where the topographical and geomorphological aspects of

the globe's surface and volume were only beginning to be explored. Thus, the first instance where the act of thinking the global was an articulate modelling was one in which the literary, exceeding the geometrical, astronomical and topographical, takes center stage as the foundational provocation for critical, global, thought.

Perhaps we will always be faced with the exceptional nature of the global as a limits-test to the imagination; even today 'very few humans have ever beheld the Earth in its entirety' (Cohen and Elkins-Tanton 2017, 8), which is to say with the naked eye, unmediated by pictoriographic representation. For most of us, the global as a phenomenon is many ways the subject of mimetic modelling; it remains speculative, fictional, a restless category. Our ongoing attempts at the articulation of a global thought are suited in many ways to the literary imagination; the entanglement with, or use of, the literary as a speculative mode through which to think the possibilities of the globe and processes of the global imaginary. The articles collected in this special issue expand and deepen our understanding of the various ways in which the global can be read into, and thought through, with literature. They articulate, engage with, question, and both the fundamental time-line of globalization and the globe itself as a limits-test. It may be that, as medieval literary scholar Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and planetary scientist Lindy Elkins-Tanton argue, 'the Earth is too large, too old, too inaccessible to our sense for us to fully apprehend it all at any one time. We live within the limitations of our human selves, making it difficult for us to contend with global-scale issues and events, like space travel and climate change' (Cohen and Elkins-Tanton 2017, 6), but it is, as the articles that comprise this special issue variously argue, with the literary that we can begin to address this difficulty on so broad a spectrum of scalar apprehension.

In these and other ways, it is the literary mode that is the answer to the boundary- and atmosphere-breaking dialectics of dwelling and exteriority, enlightenment and obfuscation, that Cohen and Elkins-Tanton see as perhaps the hallmark of the human engagement with thinking the earth (or world, or planet, or globe): '[h]umans have long struggled with their desire to view the Earth from its outside – as if we could depart the only dwelling we have ever possessed, the place of our birth, and turn back to see that world as a whole. We imagine such a view to be radiant, a revelation, and forget how much it obscures' (Cohen and Elkins-Tanton 2017, 5), and it could be that it was with Crates that this impulse to reveal and simultaneously complicate begins, and also with Crates that the intersection of the literary with multiple other disciplines of thought began. We will return to the possibilities and shortcomings of both interiorized and exteriorized global perspectives later, but for now let us remain with the possibilities of global thought that literature allows us to encounter, and often intimately so. The global, it could be argued, is the most

accessible of all of those object-concepts Timothy Morton has called 'hyperobjects'; those more-than-human entities that demand of us the sort of 'thinking on a planetary scale [that] means waking up inside an object, or rather a series of 'objects wrapped in objects' (Morton 2013, 199), and simultaneously realizing, through a contemporary mode of self-exteriorizing Keatsian 'rest', what is radically beyond 'a human gaze' (Morton 2013, 198–199). For literature allows us, for a moment, to think outside of ourselves – to think, and read, aslant – or, as the author of that seminal work on ambiguity would have it, after his expulsion from Cambridge led to a life lived across continents which was to include many years teaching in and reporting on both China and Japan – to 'accustom oneself' to the 'basic fact' that the world is comprised of multiple different modes or 'codes' of lived, moral, political, and imaginary being (Empson 1984, 142).

Through reading Empson's 'basic' mode of complex encounter critically, we can engage with ways in which literature allows us to think beyond the bounds of human perception as conventionally, academically, or scientifically, delimited. This is a productively counter-intuitive modality which we see articulated over and again in contemporary literary studies, and perhaps most vigorously in what Wai Chee Dimock calls the 'densely interactive' mode of 'deep-time' thinking (Dimock 2006, 3–4) where 'literature is the home of non-standard space and time' (Dimock 2006, 4). We can observe, and 'accustom' ourselves to how literature allows interaction with a planetary scale which admits a globe both *a priori* and *a posteriori* globalization. We can span, in the space of a single sentence, a momentary personal to an unthinkably diasporic community; the micro- to the macroscopic. We can see, too, how speculative literary projections of our globalized Now allow us to imagine future prospects of the global. We can build upon and question the methodological temptation, too, to shrinkingly conceive of the global as a 'world' predicated either on an expansion of the post-Goethean imperious ideal, or on the theme a post-Heideggerian phenomenological dwelling-place, and therefore to employ either the canonical, or decolonized, idea of a World Literature as the boundary or limit to the possibilities of a global literary thought. The 'new' World Literature is literature of 'a 'world' … constituted in the denial of a realm of irreconcilable conflicts, scalar disjunctions, and imponderable non-human agency' (Clark 2013, 5). Multiple discourses – not least the conceptual possibilities of an historical *long durée*, a linguistic and cultural code-switching, a postmodern cultural-theoretical *mesh* or *network*, an anthropological or political model of cosmopolitanism, a renewed attention to the ecological, or the multi-layered multi-perspectival digital maps of current geographical, geological, and biological thought – are implicated and entangled in this mode of literary perception. And even inside the porous domain which is often signposted as literary criticism, we have seen an upsurge,

in the last half-century, of sub-disciplinary domains which are similarly concerned with questions of globalization, cosmopolitanism, worlding (and world-making), or which sit at the interstices of, for instance, literary and scientific, literary and geographical, or literary and philosophical thought, or in border-zones between cultures, languages, traditions.

Without collaboration, there is the potential for cacophony, not counterpoint, here. And yet this process of thinking the global, one of admission and extension, with an essential scale 'far beyond human experience' (Gee 2001, 29) is one which has, equally, lead to concern that this 'whole we break into parts because of our inability immediately to grasp it entirely' (Mazlish 2006, 12) is one which (here, in the context of World Literature) cannot 'respect the many different conceptions of literature in different times and places throughout the world' (Ghosh and Miller 2016, 141). Miller's argument against the 'effort to globalize literary study' (Ghosh and Miller 2016, 141) and thence for the impossibility for a true 'world' literary studies, is not only a defense of specialism but also a matter of a privileging of the individual over a collective comparative effort; he highlights the major challenges of allowing for such 'world' disciplinarity as being those, particularly of language (or translation [Ghosh and Miller 2016, 139]), representation (or mastery of a specific literature), and circulation (representation as anthologizing, and consequently in some ways, canonization [Ghosh and Miller 2016, 140]) ... Yet to engage with the problem of thinking the global with literature is to engage in a collaborative effort; an effort that necessarily traverses disciplinary, cultural, linguistic, and conceptual boundaries and which, in so doing, engages, without irony and with much difficulty, in the impossible task of imagining the earth both in its discrete particularities and in its entirety, and making sure that this imagining is one which bears correspondence. And indeed, each of the essays which comprise this special issue of *New Global Studies* call, in different ways, to these entangled imperatives for different, yet co-existent, scales and modes of thought. These essays, as we will later see, are also broadly representative of key trends in current literary criticism which abut the question *how is it possible, with or through literature, to think the global*?, and demonstrate in their scope and scale the productive nature of the global as both paradigm and reality; a reality to which nothing is excessive or non-specific, and which resonates with every aspect of any particular lived reality at any spatio-temporal point. How could a project of literary criticism in the c21st (or any project of literary writing in the c21st) fail to acknowledge – through its linguistic articulation and material form – its entanglement with the processes of global thought?

I write through this provocative imperative to think the multiple scales implicated within the global *with* literature even as nothing about this provocation to a wider range of thought, nor about the intersections of the global and

the literary is new. The fact and challenge of the Earth as globe, and the provocation to speculate about and think through this even as the majority of humans have not observed, unmediated, the earth in its entirety, is in many ways an irresistible limits-test (see Cohen and Elkins-Tanton 2017, 8); what Timothy Clark writes of as demanding a sensitivity to the modes in which we engage in 'scale framing' (Clark 2015, 71, 73), and Ursula Heise as an 'intensely ambivalent legacy of global visions' (Heise 2008, 27) with which we yet struggle. It is a challenge to discrete and to general knowledge, to the imagination, and to the modes in which we articulate these things; it often bears with it the less-than-neutral suffix which makes of it both process and result (globe as 'globalization'). The challenge that we historicize and simultaneously contemporize, zoom in to the miniscule – discrete instances – as much as observe networked maximums – universal laws, as accurately as possible is one closely linked to the everyday of this special issue's production. On a localized scale, the present author witnessed her birthplace finally acknowledged with accuracy, as 2018 saw the 'Islands (Scotland) Act' passed and receive Royal Assent, which amongst other things bans the common practice in depictions of Scotland and the U.K. of the Northern Scottish islands being placed in a 'box' rather than depicted with due topographical accuracy. The rhetoric of the full bill and reports surrounding it were enacted in a dialectical tradition of exclusivity-inclusivity, center-periphery, borderzone and scalar thinking, and identity politics that are bound up in the rhetorics of decolonization and cosmopolitanism that empower various aspects of current global thought. Zoom out from these islands, and, as the composition of this special issue was being finalized, 2018 also saw Google Maps move away from reliance on a Mercator projection to their maps being predicated on a digitally projected of a globe. Finally, the digitized earth that we encounter via our computers, smartphones, and which we use for pedestrian and vehicular navigation was not flat. This radical alteration in what is a generally accepted and globally used mode of cartographic vision may have been unnoticed by many who travel local routes daily using this mapping tool, yet it is an important (and rather belated) re-writing of the global everyday, also positioning our receptive device as a point on a multiply scalar digitized now. The broad scale phenomenological and cultural effects of these remodeling of the world map are yet to be witnessed, but thus we can return to the relationship between 'thinking the global' and the process of 'globalization'; to the importance of staging a re-thinking or renewal of global thought (and also how this is not a new impulse).

The current argument that it is necessary we simultaneously contemporize and historicize, minimize and maximize, the global has been made in different fields of thought and across different dimensions (surface and volumetric;

temporal and topographical), and made articulate across many back issues of *New Global Studies*. And yet the literary has not, until now, been overtly included as a category, even as, if we begin to compare notes across disciplines inclusive of the literary critical and literary theoretical as broad modes of global disciplinary reasoning, a shared series of key markers of epistemological change become apparent – moments when a distinct paradigm shift occurred in models of perception, making a new global imaginary possible. Broadly, these global markers or moments can be seen to be the astronomical postulation of the world as sphere in the Third Century BCE, its 'interior' proof in the aspiration of Columbus's first voyage and Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe in the early sixteenth century, and its 'exterior' proof in the early satellite imaging of the Earth in the 1970s, which the Bruntland Report was to mark as having 'a greater impact than the Copernican Revolution' (see Heise 2008, 23). Into this broad, and planetary, chronotope we can add multiple other instances of planetary re-imagination (for instance, Jesse Oak Taylor posits 1610 and 'the Orbis hypothesis', 1784 and the steam age, and 1945 and 'the Great Acceleration' [Taylor 2017, 35–39]). These, and many more, are instances in both fact and fiction of what Peter Sloterdijk has recently called the 'social-psychological consequences of globalization' (Sloterdijk 2018, 53). Yet it is perhaps the final marker mentioned on my own broad chronotope here – the 1970s – which we see haunt most readily the global imaginary of today, the argument often being made for this as a moment when the power and reach of global capitalism exceeded that of any territory, nation-state, or collectivized political or corporate entity, and as a moment when a holistic self-regulating Gaian perspective on the earth and its environments rose in popularity. Alongside this was the utopian rhetoric of the Space Age, and, on an individual rather than planetary level, a disruption of everyday human world-vision, as popular commercial air travel meant an increase of personal as well as political transcultural dialogue, and an increased number of people who had borne witness to the curvature of earth via an aerial perspective on the globe. As a reaction to the economic and securitarian dimensions of globalization, we also see at play another version of the argument for simultaneous contemporaneity and historicism in the warring impulses towards complication (more evident in the environmental global perspectives) – the use of the global as a way of arguing for the parity of all discrete and border-complicating perspectives, actors, or events which form the nodes which make up this networked reality – and holism – the global as the minimal and maximal anthropic scale.

It is not the intention of this issue to provide a comprehensive overview in how the diverse modes of thinking, and how diverse disciplinary perspectives have led to a very distinctive Twenty-First Century mode of thinking the global,

in which literary studies is deeply and dynamically implicated. Rather, the provocation to 'think the global with literature' was born of an impulse to conversation; the sort of networked thinking which admits challenge and diversity that is only possible under the auspices of a truly global thought. It is interesting to note, at this point, ways in which other disciplinary lenses, too, have charted the tipping point of the 1970s in a contemporary context; to note echoes and points of comparison. Through an historicizing lens, and paying attention to globalization as an ongoing increase in and emphasis on the interconnectedness and interdependence of 'social relations' (Mazlish 2006, 7), Bruce Mazlish sees the marker of the 1970s as a moment where a new, or true, global imaginary took hold. With this 'new globalization', we 'must constantly bear in mind its antecedents and earlier forms' (Mazlish 2006, 8), whilst attending, at once, to the 'holistic' (i. e. not solely Anglo-America, or Western) nature of the 'enterprise', and to the interdisciplinary complexities – matters of 'politics, economics, cultures, and many other factors' (Mazlish 2006, 12) – in which this formulation of a 'new', or renewed, global thought implicates us. And indeed, the widened, more complex, perspective which we have inherited from the 1970s is a fluent global imaginary, whose social, economic, and political networks and power dynamics arrived hand-in-hand with a new phenomenology of world mapping (as point- or grid-based methods establishes themselves as dominant) and the exteriorized realization of the ancient claim of the world-as-globe (view of the world from outer space). William Rankin, writing the 'story about globalism and the mapping sciences in the twentieth century', marks the same post- or cold-war period as does Bruce Mazlish as a moment when a new global imaginary became possible. But however much Rankin's methodology may be indebted to modern historiography, his imaginary is not social but cartographic, charting 'a gradual but decisive shift from paper to electronic signals, from the logic of representation to the logic of the grid, from a focus on contiguous areas of space to a framework of points, and from meditations on truth to an interest in practical results' (Rankin 2016, 295). Rankin writes in a different way to Mazlish the same broad move towards both holism and network (or porosity) in our perception of the global in our spatial imaginary: that 'this new spatiality of knowledge and power as not a retreat from territory; instead, it was an intensification and multiplication of territory beyond the cleanly delimited borders of the territorial state.' (Rankin 2016, 295).

Finally, in a movement that echoes Mazlish and Rankin, in *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*, Paul Jay notes the 'embrace of transnationalism [...] under the auspices of the emerging study of globalization' (Jay 2010, 1–2) which effected a transformative force upon both literary production (the translation industry in particular) and literary studies in the

1970s, and goes on to argue that 'it is a mistake to approach globalization itself as a contemporary phenomenon and that it makes much more sense to take a historical now in which globalization is dated as beginning in at least the sixteenth century and covering a time span that includes the long histories of imperialism, colonialization, decolonization, and postcolonialism' (Jay 2010, 2–3), working against, whilst also admitting, the 'isolationist aspects of national cultures' (Vadde 2017, 220), extending our 'comparative frame' (Apter 2013, 176). Coupled to this is a due self-consciousness ('We create the locations we study, and this recognition ought to encourage us to continue to remap the geographies of literary and cultural forms' [Jay 2010, 4]), the call for a governing, ethical, universal as well as a foundation that is inclusionary ('the concept of a global civil society, by its very nature, invites us to think of the planet as a plausible whole, a whole that, I suggest, needs to be mapped along the temporal axis as well as the spatial, its membership open not only to contemporaries but also to those centuries apart' [Dimock 2006, 5]), and the fact that our modes of global articulation are, in the c.21st, moving on again from what was conceived in the 1970s as a 'new global' ('we are today living though a dramatic crisis of reformatting. On a fundamental level, so-called globalization calls upon human beings in nation-states to reorient ourselves from a society fortified by strong walls [...] entering an age in which weak borders and porous shells become the distinguishing feature of social systems' [Sloterdijk 2018, 53]). Woven through the essays in this special issue, I hope that you will begin to be able to read how the literary – as testimony, as speculation, as aesthetic reaction and creation – allows us rethink our social and cultural being in the face of this new global, this porous yet 'plausible whole' (Dimock 2006, 5); to see how the profound restlessness of the literary as a category of thought is well-suited to the effort to think the possibilities of the global.

The essays collected in this special issue consider a variety of modes through which the literary can be mobilized as a provocation to 'think' the global. These modes incorporate many of the overarching concerns in current literary academic debate concerning the limits and possibilities of 'world' literature and global thought, spanning comparatist, postcolonial, transnational, ecocritical paradigms. Thus, the essays draw upon and revisit various key debates not only across literary studies but also across academe as a whole – those of the center-periphery and particular-contextual methodologies; those concerned with mobility and migration, of human and other animal bodies and bodies of thought; those concerned with borderzones and interstices in language, thought, and reality; those concerned with identity politics, the rhetoric of securitarianism, and the ongoing decolonial project; those concerned

with thinking on more-than-human scales, through the deep time of the event; and those concerned with the intersections between Anthropocene thinking, human- and non-human world systems, and the various possibilities of the 'oikos' in ecological thought. Brought together, this special issue marks the beginning of an attempt to mark (and remark upon) the intersections between and entanglements of different modes and models of interdisciplinary literary global thought.

An immediate engagement with the possibilities that event-based thinking opens up for global thought, and the manner in which we read across periods, genres, and modes of literary articulation can be seen Elizabeth Strayer's article 'Recentering the Peripheral: An Event-Based Ecocritical Methodology for World Literature' and Michelle O'Brien's article 'Transpacific Resonances and Affiliations in Leanne Dunic's *To Love the Coming End* and Ruth Ozeki's *The Tale for the Time Being*'. Strayer concentrates on the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa as a way to interrogate what is perhaps an over-reliance in cultural and literary studies on the anthropic scale. Krakatoa in the nineteenth century – 'isolated, unpopulated' – provides an unlikely center from which to engage in continent-spanning genre-spanning literary and cultural criticism, but, by calling upon contemporary reports of the event itself, and a world-systems knowledge that allows for effects of the volcanic eruption to have taken place under the auspices not only of a literary and cultural frame of inheritance, but also due to the perceptions and articulations of the very real environmental effects of the eruption, Strayer's way of thinking the global through multidisciplinary and intersectoral assemblage, is a particularly instructive one. Like Strayer, O'Brien also calls on the non-human event – in this case the 2011 Tôhoku earthquake, and thence the 'emergent body of '3/11 literature'' – as a mode by which the literary can be seen as a reframing, interrogating the real and rhetorical intersections of the *natural* and *national* disaster, discovering new modes of narration which fit better the transpacific resonance and global scale of the disaster in question, and recovering, through correspondence and active rewriting, individual histories previously lost or displaced by the violent operations of boundary-making in the name of any given nation state.

Extending the multi-nodal, networked, and unabashedly global stage of racialized migrant experience that powers much of the comparative analysis of O'Brien's article, Nicholas Gamso's article 'Exposure and Black Migrancy in Teju Cole' takes the (over)exposed figure of the c.21st migrant as a way through which to think through how current 'logics of racialization' and 'privation and control' in globe-spanning surveillance, classification, data, and knowledge-systems even yet

underpin 'globalization's networked continuities and [systems of] structural difference'. Gamso's pressure points are multi-nodal – Teju Cole's *Open City*; critiques of the Global City, of current infrastructures and theories of borderzones, mobility and migration; the articulation of a new body politic in the light of critical race studies – working in concert with each other in order to open the study up to a renewed global perspective, asking how a necessarily opaque, discreet, imaginative scale can 'be spatial and meaningful, which is to say material and cultural, at once?'. This sense of the discreetly personal and networked individuality, coupled with the ongoing effort of decolonial critique is extended to a critique of the networked nation-state in David Watson's article 'Failing States, Human (Insecurity) and the American* World Novel'. Watson's article employs a methodology that is at once geopolitical and also event based – 'sketching out the colliding narratives operative in the 2010 response' to 'Haiti's January 2010 earthquake'. By performing readings of post-Cold War biopolitics *with* literary works by Dave Eggers, Jennifer Egan, Denis Johnson, Dana Spiotta, and Bob Shacochis, also engaging productively with an updated the possibilities of the c.21st cosmopolitan or geopolitical sensibility in the face of the complex extension of US securitarian concerns well beyond its own national borders.

With its geopolitical lens attuned to the African continent as a cosmopolitan center out of which a c.21st global imaginary can be mapped, Lorenzo Mari's article 'Old and New Names: Afropolitanism, Failed-State Fiction, and World Literature' returns us in many ways to the Goethean aftermath of World Literature, reading works by Kabila and Adichie in the context of the current debate around 'afropolitanism' as a way through which to criticize prior – cosmopolitan, globalized, trans-cultural – models of global understanding. Where Strayer's, O'Brien's, and Watson's articles articulated alternative models for our conversation about thinking the global with literature through pressure- or nexus-points provided by different non-human global events, Mari's engagement with the oil economy and the emergent genre of 'petrofiction' demonstrates yet another way in which both human and non-human agency shapes the global imaginary. Finally, in the spirit of the dynamic, collaborative, movement of the global literary imaginary, Ranjan Ghosh's Round Table, 'Beyond the Global', which concludes this issue, brings together six voices in global literary criticism from across continents. This round-table opens out the transcontinental correspondence, 'juxtaposition', and 'interweaving' (Ghosh and Miller 2016, vi) which was Ghosh and J. Hillis Miller's project in *Thinking Literature Across Continents* to the prospect of further conversations and entanglements. The essays by Rob Wilson, Sandeep Banerjee, Frank Schulze-Engler, Zahi Zalloua, Ming Xie, and Ghosh himself, are, in themselves, a demonstration of the diverse possibilities that the literary

can bring to the prospect of global thought, enacting further the model for collaborative thinking that was the foundation for both Ghosh and Miller's project and for this issue of *New Global Studies*.

References

Apter, Emily. 2013. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London: Verso.
Clark, Timothy. 2013. "What on World Is the Earth? the Anthropocene and Fictions of the World." *OLR* 35, no. 1(July 2013): 5–24.
Clark, Timothy. 2015. *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London: Bloomsbury.
Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, and Linda T. Elkins-Tanton. 2017. *Earth*. London: Bloomsbury.
Dimock, Wai-Chee. 2006. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep-Time*. New York: Princeton University Press.
Empson, William. 1984. *Using Biography*. London: Chatto and Windus.
Gee, Henry. 2001. *In Search of Deep Time*, 2nd ed. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
Ghosh, Ranjan, and J. Hillis Miller. 2016. *Thinking Literature Across Continents*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.
Heise, Ursula K. 2008. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Jay, Paul. 2010. *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
Mazlish, Bruce. 2006. *The New Global History*. New York: Routledge.
Morton, Timothy. 2013. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Rankin, William. 2016. *After the Map: Cartography, Navigation, and the Transformation of Territory in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Rebellato, Dan. 2009. *Theatre and Globalization*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Roller, Duane W. 2015. *Ancient Geography: The Discovery of the World in Classical Greece and Rome*. London: I.B. Tauris.
Sloterdijk, Peter. 2018. *What Happened in the Twentieth Century?* Trans. Christopher Turner. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Strabo. 1917. *Geography*. Trans. H.C. Hamilton and W. Falconer. Vol. 1. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
Taylor, Jesse Oak. 2017. "Globalize." In *Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, and Lowell Duckert, 30–43. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Vadde, Aarthi. 2017. *Chimeras of Form: Modernist Internationalism beyond Europe, 1914–2016*. New York: Columbia University Press.